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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Lewis Theobald. His Contribution to English Scholarship. With Some Unpublished Letters. By RICHARD FOSTER JONES. New York: Columbia University Press, 1919. Pp. xi+363.

This interesting study, which has the twofold purpose of giving a biography and of demonstrating the derivation of Theobald's editorial method from Richard Bentley, acknowledges frankly a heavy indebtedness to Lounsbury's *Text of Shakespeare*, but fortunately excels that work in several respects. There is less of the clenched fist and flashing eye; and a greater brevity—perhaps it is tact—has suppressed some of Lounsbury's slashing conclusions. While Dr. Jones does not disagree with Lounsbury as often as he should, his volume is in general a safer book to consult than Lounsbury's, though the latter has a much greater wealth of documentation.

The relative slightness of the new material on Theobald's life and personality is disappointing. We should like more information as to the sources of his income, as to the basis of his friendly relations with Sir Robert Walpole; we should like to know why, in view of these relations, he appears from 1718 to 1728 more often in connection with the Tory *Mist's* journals than with any other newspapers; we are puzzled by the savageness of his attack on Pope, and cannot but wonder if he was urged to an aggressive tone by other influences than his undoubted love of truth. Did he consciously try to found his scholarly reputation on the ruins of Pope's?

Dr. Jones has limned us a personality for the editor; but this portrait seems not to be his happiest achievement. He speaks of Theobald as a modest, sensitive person, lacking in self-reliance and "rudely shaken by Pope" (see pp. 167, 204, 215, 250). Evidence for this view is found in Theobald's reliance on Warburton and in the remark of Dr. Grey that Theobald, "'a person seemingly in other respects very modest,' treated Pope too harshly notwithstanding *The Dunciad*." As evidence of something very different from modesty and diffidence—which seem almost Theobald's greatest lacks—one may cite the title-page and tone of *Shakespeare Restored*, Theobald's treatment of Meystayer in connection with the *Perfidious Brother*, his habit of exaggeration (p. 175), his dogmatic manner of speaking (p. 213), and even his attitude toward Warburton—the laying upon him of one request after another involving much labor, and when Warburton, restive for lack of an invitation to honor either the title-page or at least the Preface of Theobald's *Shakespeare* with his name, showed signs of setting up as an independent critic, the calm announcement on Theobald's part that his

acknowledgment in the Preface of Warburton's services "has entail'd this rich Consequence, *that it has given me a Right* (through your generous Grant) *to demand all your Capacities for my Service.*" (The italics are Theobald's.) These are not the words of a diffident man.

This matter of personality seems important, because the clash with Pope was largely a matter of personalities. In the war between the scholar and the *bel-esprit*, Pope, to be sure, early allied himself with the wits; but while his attack on "verbal criticism" is as explicit in his *Essay on Criticism* as in the *Dunciad*, the latter has an acridity born of personal dislikes. Not "blockheadry" but lack of wit and gentlemanly decorum was the hinge of Pope's satire on Theobald, as he plainly shows in the passage he adapts from La Bruyère concerning Theobald (see *Dunciad* of 1729, p. 184). If, on the other hand, Theobald had had a different personality, he would have listened to Pope's calls for help on Shakespeare, would have given some of his numberless emendations, would have received favors in return (for Pope could be generous in such cases), would have eventually become Pope's successor as editor of Shakespeare—and the world would have lost the *Dunciad*.

With regard to the vexed problems concerning this satire Dr. Jones is usually content with traditional views, especially those of Lounsbury. Most of these views have been based on the romantic assumption that Pope was as black as can be painted. Hence the malicious notion, generally accepted, that the "Bathos" was designed to serve as an *agent provocateur* to justify the *Dunciad*, a notion for which there is very little evidence. Presswork on the third, called the "last," volume of the *Miscellanies* had begun as early as June, 1727 (see the Elwin-Courthope *Pope*, IX, 524), and the expectation was to publish in the winter. The *Dunciad* was to conclude the volume. The "Bathos," which was "in great forwardness" in June, Pope intended for the fourth, called finally the "third," volume of the *Miscellanies*. Presently the poet determined to publish the *Dunciad* separately, and not having verses to fill the consequent gap in the "last" volume, he filled it with the "Bathos," the only one of the prose pieces fitted to appear in a volume devoted otherwise to verse. The *agent provocateur* theory demands the assumption that Pope feared the Dunces. Mystification with regard to the authorship of the *Dunciad* does not prove fear; for such mystification was natural to Pope; many of his major works appeared anonymously. He may have feared actions for libel, and he may have feared that his stooping to answer his lowly opponents—even though for twelve years their attacks had been frequent and (so far as we know) often unprovoked—would be a reproach to one of his standing; but his assurance of triumph over them is seen in his words to Swift (see the Elwin-Courthope *Pope*, VII, 124): "This poem will rid me of these insects." On the face of it, why should the "Bathos," which is predominantly an attack on the dulness of poets, be regarded as an attempt to provoke attacks to justify the *Dunciad*,

which primarily attacks scholarship? If Pope had been scheming to provoke outbursts from Theobald and his like, he would have changed the "Bathos" much more extensively, and Philips and Blackmore would there have yielded to Theobald in importance. Furthermore, the *Dunciad* came out only ten weeks after the "Bathos," and hence friend and foe alike would have seen that the poem was in press before many had time to make considered retorts to the prose attack. The "Bathos" is perhaps to be regarded as the first overt act in a Pope "offensive," but there is no *post hoc* relationship effectively established between it and the *Dunciad*. The current view of the matter, however, has even smaller grounds of credence if we accept it, as Lounsbury and Jones do, with the added notion that the "Bathos" failed to evoke any great quantity of attacks. Pope could easily have postponed the *Dunciad* until two or three volumes of attacks were added. The Lounsbury-Jones idea of the inefficacy of the "Bathos" finds its only basis in an unwarranted belief that all such attacks were included in a volume called *A Compleat Collection of all the verses, essays, Letters and Advertisements, which have been occasioned by the Publication of Three Volumes of Miscellanies, by Pope and Company* (1728). From the relatively slender resources at hand the reviewer has been able to find at least six additional attacks printed within the ten weeks between the "Bathos" and the *Dunciad*, and there is every reason to believe that the larger resources of English libraries would furnish several other items of the same sort. At times in his career Pope was the aggressor; he was not so in the case of Theobald. So far as the grounds of the quarrel go, on the other hand, Theobald certainly had the better of it, except for the fact that the needless aggressiveness of *Shakespeare Restored* struck the first blow.

So far as demeanor during the battle is concerned, we may readily agree with Dr. Jones that Theobald seems the more decorous. But we might have to revise this opinion if we knew as much about the small details of Theobald's career¹ as we do of Pope's. It is disingenuous of Theobald to insist that

¹ For example, if we knew the detailed activities of the so-called "Concanen Club." Dr. Jones, more judicious than Lounsbury, is frank to admit the existence of the Club. But both Lounsbury and he should have taken this Club and its connection with *Mist's Journal* more seriously. It is interesting to note that the leading article of (*Mist's Weekly-Journal or Saturday's-Post* for March 20, 1725 (which is an attack on the *Shakespeare* of Pope and Tonson) says in closing: "And we take this Opportunity of inviting you [Mr. Mist], to be a Member of a Club or Society of Authors, which is to meet once a Week, or often, as Occasion shall require, to consider of Ways and Means for keeping up and maintaining the Privileges of Authors, and defending our Rights and Properties against the Incroachments of Booksellers and Players." Theobald was a member of this Club just being formed; his dedication of *Shakespeare Restored* is dated two days before this letter attacking Pope and announcing the Club appeared in the *Journal*. Clearly he was not commencing his attack without "moral support," and one may suspect that his unfortunate tone concerning Pope's work came in part from this Club. Another passage in the letter just quoted assures the seller of Pope's *Shakespeare* that a new, better edition "would reward him in the Sale." This seems certainly to hint that as early as 1725 Theobald dreamed of editing the dramatist.

"he had always treated Pope with deference and respect" (Jones, p. 112); but, so far as we know, he was guilty of nothing so bad as the "lies and half-lies" which Pope seems to have told. In at least one case, however, the poet was not so guilty as has generally been thought. He does not accuse Theobald (in the note to Book I, line 106, of the 1729 *Dunciad*) of ingratitude but of bad manners. Pope had publicly advertised for aid on his edition of Shakespeare; and Theobald, while not giving aid, had at the same time asked favors of Pope. His later defense against a supposed charge of ingratitude, while it has satisfied commentators from Nichols to Dr. Jones, seems not to answer the charge really made. Theobald is further disingenuous in his defense of concealing his design on Shakespeare when Pope asked for aid. In one letter (see Nichols' *Illustrations*, II, 221) he says: "To say I concealed my design is a slight mistake: for I had no such certain design, till I saw how incorrect an Edition Mr. Pope had given the publick." Unfortunately in another letter (see Lounsbury, pp. 331-32), Theobald had already used a totally different defense: "It is a very grievous complaint on his side, that I would not communicate all my observations upon Shakespeare, tho' he requested it by public advertisements. I must own, I considered the labor of twelve years' study upon this author of too much value rashly to give either the profit of it to a bookseller whom I had no obligations to; or to the credit of an editor so likely to be thankless." Theobald was certainly ready by 1725 to prosecute any design with regard to the text of Shakespeare that might yield most return in reputation. The prosecution was, on his side, entirely justifiable, but it was neither generous nor, in manner, quite gentlemanly. On the other hand we may grant that Pope distorted facts recklessly and often—as, for example, when he transferred the weekly crucifixion of Shakespeare from the *Censor* to *Mist's Journal*; but may one suggest that few commentators ever grant the possibility of an *unintentional* misstatement in Pope's work? The *Dunciad* seems fully as reckless as it does calculating in its malice.

Usually the effect of Pope's "libels" has been thought scathing; one hardly knows how to interpret Dr. Jones's view. On page 133 he says: "It is this variorum edition of *The Dunciad* that was largely responsible for the character of Theobald that has come down to recent times." On page 198, speaking of the period after Theobald's *Shakespeare* had appeared, Dr. Jones tells us that Theobald's "letters written at this time also show that his edition had entirely removed any stigma that might have been incurred from *The Dunciad*, and that he occupied a favorable position in the eyes of the public." Page 203 reiterates this view. If Theobald lived down the variorum *Dunciad*, it seems strange that after Pope deposed him in 1742, the odium should return. Has it ever been suggested that allied with Pope's satire was the fact that Theobald was neither a university man nor a clergyman? Very few men of his century outside that potent dual tradition attained to better reputation than did Theobald. In leaving this phase

of Dr. Jones's work one may remark that there is no occasion for amazement that Pope called the brilliant emendator dull; one need only remember that the *bel-esprit* from Solomon to Pope has tended to regard much study as a weariness and all editors as dull dogs. Theobald's letters here printed by Dr. Jones show more power of emendation than of personality.

The more valuable part of Dr. Jones's work is that which traces the methods of English scholarship in Theobald's day. The derivation of the method from Bentley is made so probable by Dr. Jones that few will dispute his conclusions. But having thus established the dependence of Theobald on the great classicist, Dr. Jones proceeds to forget Bentley at times and to heap all the credit upon his hero. We are told (p. 244) "that Jortin, Warton, Upton, and Church used a method which did not exist before Theobald." And on page 251 we read: "One reason why in the end Theobald's reputation was unable to overcome the misrepresentations of Pope lay in the fact that as his method became more general its source was obscured." But, it may be urged, Theobald did not originate; he only adapted; and Jortin, Warton, Upton, and Church were also capable of independent adaptation. It is not entirely clear in what respects Theobald modified Bentley's method. We are not told much except that while Bentley drew parallels for purposes of annotation or emendation from all possible sources, Theobald sensibly made a specialty of expounding Shakespeare by parallels from the dramatist himself and from books that he might have read. Patrick Hume, however, in his 321 folio pages of notes on Milton had cited many parallels from Milton's reading—for purposes other than emendation, to be sure—and he should receive credit for at least hinting this adaptation. Similarly, while approving in substance Theobald's claim that his work is "the first Assay of the kind on any modern Author whatsoever," one should consider at least Fenton's unsuccessful "essay" of Milton (1725) and possibly some editions of Continental authors. It is happiness in emendation that gives Theobald his soundest reputation today; he is less admirable for method. Dr. Jones tells us on page 192 that Theobald "blazed the trail succeeding editors have always followed"; and on page 219, that he "made popular a method which, with amplifications and modifications, has come down to the present day." If Dr. Jones had compared Theobald's methods with the brilliant textual methods that have recently been evolved for Shakespeare by Pollard, McKerrow, and other English scholars, he would have revised his account of the defects of Theobald's edition (pp. 189-91). Considered from a modern point of view Theobald's method was very bad for at least three reasons unstressed by Dr. Jones. Theobald chose the least authoritative text extant—Pope's—as the basis of his edition; he made no attempt, so far as Dr. Jones shows, to determine the interrelationships and relative authority of the different quartos and folios; and lastly he was far too eager to emend. It is very well to assert his insistence on proof for an emendation; he was not like Pope or Fenton in the matter. But one who boasts that he

can make five hundred more emendations on Shakespeare than a rival editor; who fairly early in his career announces two thousand emendations on Beaumont and Fletcher, and later can "amend and account for above 20 thousand Passages in Hesychius"—such a scholar seems not a model of method in the "critical doubt." For his own day, Theobald's method was good; but we may be thankful that it has not "come down to the present day" without being thoroughly revolutionized.

The ground covered by this study is most varied, extensive, and difficult. Dr. Jones has displayed great industry and good judgment; but it is not to be expected that a doctoral dissertation on so complex a field should be free from error. It is, therefore, with no desire to depreciate this judicious industry that the following errors are indicated. In view of the existing evidence¹ that "Book and the man" was a misprint in the first *Dunciad*, it is regrettable that Lounsbury's theory on the passage is accepted by Dr. Jones (p. 129). Again he follows Lounsbury and others in misdating the first appearance of Pope's "Fragment of a Satire," a misdating which would be harmless were it not for the unwarranted implications woven about the wrong date and Gildon's "venal quill" by Mr. Courthope. The proper date, with the first known version of the "Fragment," is found in the *St. James Journal* of December 15, 1722.² In speaking of Fielding's attitude toward Theobald, one should certainly mention chapter viii of a *Journey from This World to the Next*.

Errors, probably typographical, have been noted as follows: Zachary Pearce's name is misspelled, p. 40, note 26; on p. 357 the Index should refer to Hawley, not Harley, Bishop. A number of references are faulty: Note 47, on p. 19, does not support the text in all the assertions made. On p. 87, note 35, for 160 read 161. On p. 93, note 52 should refer to p. iv rather than to vi. Page 116, note 33, for 20 read 181; p. 156, note 2, for 422 read 322; p. 160, note 11, for 241-45 read 341-45; p. 166, note 27, for September 17 read September 19; p. 182, note 60, for xlv read xlvi; on p. 349, the reference concerning the *Metamorphoses* should be to Nichols' *Illustrations*, Vol. II, p. 711, not p. 708.

The bibliography of Theobald's works (Appendix D) is also susceptible of improvement. Complete bibliographical description of the works is never given, and title-pages are printed with unsystematic modifications. One would like statements as to how many times the various works were reprinted. Certainly the earliest editions should be listed, and this is not done in the case of the *History of the Loves of Antiochus and Stratonice*, here dated 1719, but apparently printed in 1717. *Ban and Syrinx, an Opera, in one Act* (so advertised in the *Weekly-Journal or Saturday's-Post* for

¹ See the Elwin-Courthope *Pope*, IV, 271, n. 2, and VII, 110.

² *Ibid.*, V, 445; see also for Mr. Aitken's discovery of this version the *Academy* for February 9, 1889.

March 22, 1718) is omitted from the bibliography altogether, though mentioned on page 26. The *Gentleman's Library*, which Dr. Jones has "found no trace or mention of . . . except in Theophilus Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, vol. 5, p. 287," and which he consequently dates 1722, is frequently advertised, as are several of Theobald's works, in the *Weekly-Journal* early in 1718. The advertisement should be interesting to any who believe Theobald above equivocation, because it attempts to give the anonymous work the protection of Sir Richard Steele's name. The advertisement notices the *Censor*, the *Gentleman's Library*, and the *Lady's Library*. Yoked by an "Also" with a long description of the *Censor* comes the following:

The Gentleman's Library; containing Rules for Conduct in all Parts of Life, viz. Education, Learning, Dress, Conversation, and Choice of Friends, Love and Gallantry, Courage and Honour, Affectation, Idleness, Envy, Recreations and Studies, Lying, Wit and Humour, Drinking, Marriage and conjugal Vertues, Religion, Detractions, Talkativeness, Impertinent Curiosity, Pride, Contentment, Retirement, &, Also

The Lady's Library, published by Sir Richard Steele.¹

Dr. Jones's dissertation has been subjected to this detailed examination because, in spite of some few imperfections, it should displace much of the material in Lounsbury's brilliant but untrustworthy *Text of Shakespeare*. The imperfections seem due less to lack of ability on the part of Dr. Jones than to our American system which frequently imposes as the problem for a doctoral dissertation a task impossible of achievement in the time ordinarily allotted to such work.

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The Elements of Old English. By SAMUEL MOORE and THOMAS A. KNOTT. Ann Arbor, Michigan: George Wahr, 1919. Pp. vii+209.

Historical Outlines of English Phonology and Middle English Grammar. By SAMUEL MOORE. Ann Arbor, Michigan: George Wahr, 1919. Pp. vii+83.

For nearly thirty years no new textbook for the use of university classes in elementary Old English has appeared in America. During that period the best and most widely used book has been a reader with a grammatical introduction. Because of the brevity and schematic arrangement of the "Grammar" in that work, the book has not brought about a standardization of instruction in Old English; in some universities instructors interested in the scientific study of language have supplemented the "Grammar" by much

¹ *Weekly-Journal or Saturday's-Post*, 8 February, 1718; repeated at least eleven times thereafter.